7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

between the individual mouth and the communal dish. More solid foods, such as meat or rice, were eaten with the fingers, and, since each dish was communal, those who ate slowly went hungry. The midday and evening meals were both known as "*buk*", or bread; for theoretically, and in the poorer houses practically, maize bread was the basic foodstuff, while the other dishes were regarded merely as sauces to make the bread more palatable.

In the course of our journeys we touched life at many angles and experienced extremes of poverty and plenty. Often we were lucky to get even a lump of cheese and maize bread, or a cup of unsweetened milk. At other times, especially in Mati, we were surfeited by a wealthy host on successive dishes of eggs, boiled mutton, roast mutton *pilaf*, and luscious *halvas* and *baklavas* in the Turkish style. As a general rule, however, Albanian fare was lacking in variety and the average meal might be a soup of beans, a dish of boiled mutton, and a bowl of milk or *yoghourt*. The guest of honour usually received the sheep's head — the brain and eyes were considered the greatest delicacies — or sometimes the kidneys and the tail. Fatness was the quality most admired in sheep, though even with hard exercise all of us except Smiley found the enjoyment of lumps of hot boiled fat an acquired taste. Milk was the usual drink at meals, drunk like soup from a communal bowl and served as a last course. Water was also to be had, but only on request, for there was usually only one glass or mug in the house. Before and after meals the host came round with a basin and ewer, and the guests washed their hands — a most necessary proceeding seeing that these were used for eating. In the richer houses the washing water was warmed and home-made soap was also provided. Each man left the table when he had finished eating without waiting for his fellows; and when the chief guests had done there would be a "deuxième service" for the rest of the company, or sometimes two tables might be set at once. The guests had the right — and often used it — to criticise any meanness in their entertainment to their host's face; and he would never sit at table or taste food until the last of the guests had eaten.

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

513 When all had done,[1] mattresses and eiderdowns would be brought and spread out on the floor for the half-dozen guests of honour, while the others made themselves as comfortable as they might with their overcoats and jackets. It was still considered rather indecent to undress, but before the lights were snuffed out the prudent ones would gather their arms and effects about them against the dangers and confusions of a night attack. In cold weather the fire was kept alight till morning ; in summer the room would often become intolerably stuffy from the accumulated animal warmth of a score of snoring sleepers.

512 The Albanians were not given to early rising, for their evening hours were late, and in the mountains the mornings were cold. They would get up between eight and nine o'clock and, by a generous convention, the younger guests were left sleeping till last. The mountaineers knew not breakfast ; but 264 in many houses the host would bring a cup of coffee or of hot, ●515 sweetened milk when he saw us wake. Ablutions were per- 301 functory, each man, or the host, pouring cold water from a ewer over his fellow's hands, with which the latter seldom did more than dab his eyes. Moustaches were *de rigueur*, though by exception Abas Kupi was clean-shaven ; but only priests or bandits grew beards. Shaving, however, was most often a weekly affair and considered a sufficient occasion to warrant the valedictory greeting of "*Meschnett*" — an equivalent of 000 "God bless you" — to the shaver. In these matters I conformed to the customs of the country, but Maclean and Smiley insisted on adhering to the standards of cleanliness of their distinguished cavalry regiments. Stripped to the waist and with razors flashing, they washed daily and thoroughly, to the great wonder of the mountaineers who crowded round to 514 watch. Albanian sanitary arrangements were primitive but ingenious. The closet, which adjoined the guest room, projected, sometimes precariously, from the house over the courtyard below. It consisted of a hole in the floor, often of impracticably narrow circumference ; and, underneath it, the thrifty Albanians were wont to keep their poultry, which gobbled up a strange diet with evident relish.

[1] [i.e. eating — Analyst]

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EG1 Albania EG1

tree-trunk. A similar section, split lengthways and hollowed out, made two wash-tubs for laundry work. Toilet appliances, a basin and ewer bought in the bazaar, and paraffin lamps from the same source, completed the list of additions.

The above outline omits many small variations in Albanian houses and furniture as irrelevant to the main subject of this book. Mention must be made, however, of certain houses which differed widely from the average type. The first were found among the Highlanders (Alb. *Malësorë*, 'mountaineers'), the semi-nomads who wintered on the soggy plains at the mouth of the river Mat. These houses had walls of planking or wattle and daub, with roofs of tiles or strips of wood. They rested on vertical sections of tree trunks about two feet high which had been laid at close intervals on the ground but had not been driven into it like piles. In this way they kept snug and dry even during the winter floods. All over Albania granaries were raised some distance from the ground in order to keep out the rats, but so far as is known, there were no houses on stilts except at the mouth of the Mat.

A number of Highland houses also contained a child's play-pen which might be as little as twenty-five inches long, wide and high. A shallow porringer projected from one of the top bars, chipped from the same piece of wood as the bar itself. In this pen Highland children spent all their winter days from the time they could crawl until they were three years old. They had no toys, but practised walking round the pen, sometimes stopping to eat a little bread and milk from the porringer with the diminutive home-made, wooden spoon which was tied to the bar, or merely gazing broodingly at the fire. The mothers meanwhile cooked, spun or gossiped, each secure in the knowledge that her child was on the dry floor of the kitchen and not sitting outside in the quagmire of mud that reached up to the very doorstep. The Highlanders said they invented both the houses and the play-pen themselves, but it is possible that they were at least advised by the Austro-Hungarian troops who were stationed in the neighbourhood for part of the war of 1914–18.

In Shpat, near Elbasan, huts were built for many bridegrooms. In the higher villages trunks of young trees about as tall as a man's waist were planted in a rectangle of the size desired, their boughs, while still green and flexible, were laced in and out of these uprights, and cross-pieces of timber were nailed to the uprights

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

the housekeeper who remained discreetly out of sight behind the door where she handed it to the men. She must wash up but warned by the proverb which says of work done badly by firelight because there are no lamps, 'Evening's work, morning's laugh', she waited till the next day. Then her task was much less formidable than one might think. At both the men's and the women's table everybody ate out of a common dish, fingers were used for a meat course, and one and the same wooden spoon dealt with soup and any semi-liquid food that followed. The men generally had their own spoons as they thought this more hygienic; they washed them themselves—rather sketchily—immediately after supper, and tucked them into their breast, ready for the next meal at home or at a friend's. If coffee was served, the master of the house or his deputy rinsed out the cups, for the precious utensils must never leave the sitting-room in case the women took to drinking coffee. Twenty men could sup on soup, meat, bread, curds and coffee without the housekeeper's having more than three centre dishes and the dining-table to wash.

A multiple household might contain as many as twenty persons, a goodly enough number but only a pale reflexion of past glories. All over north Albania it used to be the custom for brothers, first and even second cousins to live with their wives and children, and probably several aged uncles and aunts and young sisters, under the same roof. Enormous housefuls sometimes resulted. For instance, there were sixty-four people in Gjon Macaj's house in Perlat about 1900, ninety-five in Isuf Isaku's in Zdrâjshë in 1923, and seventy in Lushan Sadrija's in Shalë even more recently. The houses themselves, though conforming to the regulation pattern of men's sitting-room, kitchen, stables, store-rooms, and one bedroom for every family unit, were remarkably small by our standards. Quite a little bedroom suffices for seven or eight persons if they all sleep on the floor, and both the sitting-room and the kitchen often served as dormitories, the former for men guests and the unmarried or widowed men of the family and the latter for women guests and the widows of the family. The primary cause of this way of life was the lack of public security in former times. Enemies and bandits could wreak their will on a single-handed man, but had to respect one surrounded by well-armed guards, and these the trustiest possible, his nearest relatives. After Albania became independent, public security improved so much that the need for a family to see

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

grapes. They also place at the four corners of each plot four vine stems tied together with straw bands, and under them a piece of a cake called a *kophtopite*, made specially for the purpose, wine being one of its ingredients. A round loaf is rolled from the gate to the middle of the vineyard, and then distributed to the ravens, crows, and other birds which damage the grapes, with this invitation, "Assemble, O crows and ravens, so that we may eat and drink, and that you may do us no more harm!"

On the 1st of February, St. Tryphon's Day, it is considered lucky to work in the fields, but not in the vineyards. On the 2nd, the "Feast of the Purification," all kinds of small pulse and cereals are cooked together in a pot, and this mess, called *karkasina*, forms the staple food of the day. On the eve of the 1st of March, a kind of divination is performed by throwing into the fire a particular kind of leaf and pronouncing at the same time the name of a member of the family. If the leaf makes an explosive noise while burning, it is held to be a good omen for the person indicated, but if it burns quietly, the reverse.[1] On this vigil a clod of earth, on which a few drops of wolf's milk have been sprinkled, is thrown against the door in order that the cows and goats may milk well. In the morning the cattle are whipped with cherry branches, in order that they may enjoy good health, and people wash themselves with wine with a view to preserving themselves from vermin during the summer. As an additional precaution, they also catch a flea, which they impale on the point of a new

[1] The ancient φελλαρεύς.

11:Start E-4 (no date) 1939 EF1 Yugoslavia EF1
Albania EG1
Serbs EF6
Montenegrins EF5
Contemporary Macedonians EF8

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291 in it shows a portion of this pattern, which has not been covered like all the rest with
531 white beads, and a yellow chain-stitched outline. Little tassels of brown, blue and
286 green with white beads at the ends also form part of the decoration.

No. 1935-72. A delightful girdle for a Moslem woman's trousers of hand-woven muslin has very handsome decorated ends worked in Turkey red, with tiny spots of blue, yellow and white.

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291 The pattern is clearly shown at "F" on Plate XV, the upper part has been
294 woven in by means of a number of small spools, as many as twenty-five might be
286 in use on the loom, as each perpendicular bit of the pattern needs its own spool. A
531 similar effect could be got by darning, but such long strips of vertical pattern would not be as evenly worked.

The border at the end is either needle-woven or again fine spools used, but this time on the bare warp thread whilst in the loom, and it is therefore more akin to the tapestry method of working a pattern, with the warp thread pulled more tightly so as to leave holes. This method and style of pattern is sometimes called Persian open-work. The edge of the girdle is rolled and carefully whipped over with a cotton thread.

No. 1935-24. One half of a man's festival collar, worked in needlepoint in cream silk, is shown at "G" on Plate XV, and is a charming example of this method of producing lace.

Picots, solid buttonholing to form squares and triangles, and wrapped bars are the chief stitches used in making the patterns. The two narrow strips of fine linen probably formed a foundation for working upon.

"This is a similar type of collar to the one made fashionable by Byron." (M.E.D.).

No. 1935-23. An everyday collar for a man's wear is also included in the collection. It again has two strips of a coarser linen as foundation, and is decorated
A mainly by several rows of overcast scallops and picots worked in coarse cotton.
291 **No. 1937-15.** This specimen is a pair of crimson silk brocade sleeves, joined by
531 a printed cotton back, for a Moslem Albanian woman's dress. "They were bought in
294 Scutari in 1903 and could be attached to the shirt or blouse for wear under a jelek or a giubba" (M.E.D.). The pointed cuff is trimmed with gold braid and a motive worked in gold cord.

C
291 **No. 1939-2.** The remaining sketch on Plate XVI is of a silvered copper buckle
301 such as would be worn over her corded waistband by the woman from Monastir
531 (Bitolj), whose costume is illustrated on Plate IX.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Household Linen.

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A. **"Marama" or Towels.**

286 There are thirteen towels in the collection, two of these "marama" for every
● 515 day use have coloured weft stripes at the ends, the rest are guest or ceremonial towels
531 and have ornamented ends, seven are embroidered and four are decorated with
583 borders worked in by fine spools of small size, the appearance of the designs being like fine darning..

[Text continues on p. 72]

11: Start E-4 (no date) 1939 EF1 Yugoslavia
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Serbs EF6
Montenegrins EF5

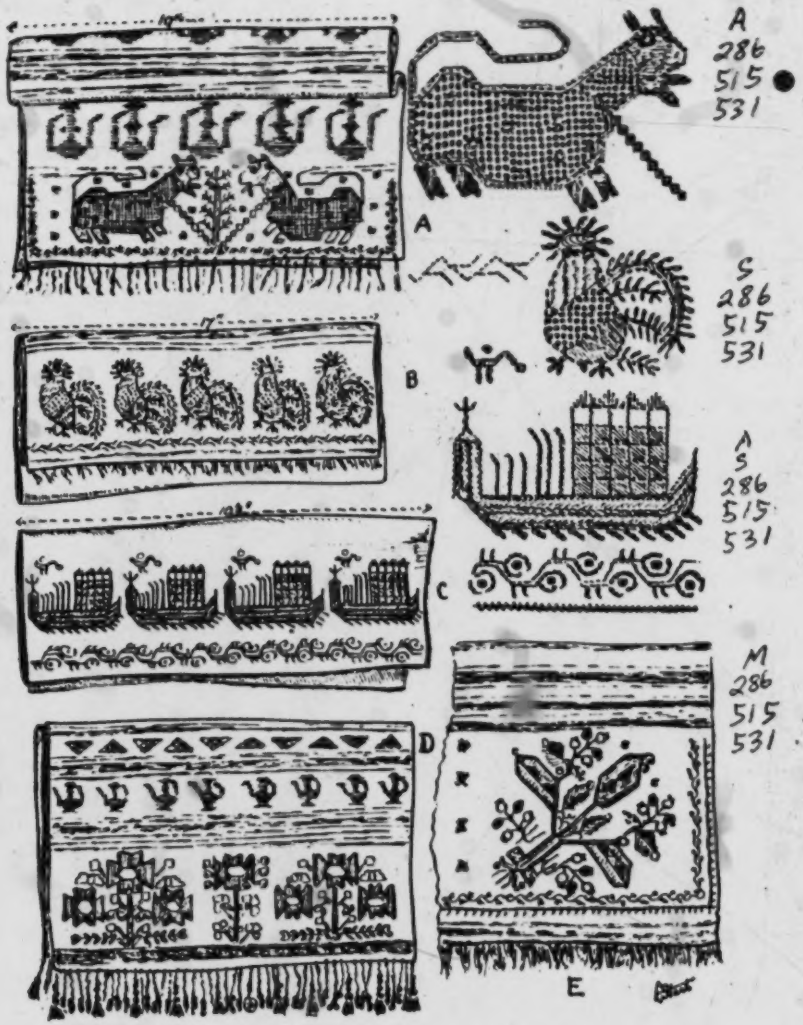

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PLATE XVII.—" Marama " or towels. A, With " ibrik " or spouted water vessel, from Prizren. B, Cock design, from Kossova villayet. C, Ark and dove pattern, from Prizren. D From Kolasin. E, Design showing Turkish influence, from Prizren.

11:Start E-4 (no date) 1939 EF1 Yugoslavia EF1
Albania EG1
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"As a rule these embroidered towels are from wedding outfits, the bride's coffer." (M.E.D.).

No. 1937-11. Perhaps the most interesting of the embroidered group is an old marama bought at Prizren in 1908, which is probably Moslem Albanian work. It is of fine hand-spun and loosely woven cotton rather like a muslin, with groups of wide, double weft stripes in cotton and finer weft stripes in silk.

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In its length of four feet there are five plainly woven bands, three inches wide, decorated with free spool-woven "ibriks" or water vessels, and the plainly woven ends are embroidered. (Plate XVIIA).

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"The ibrik is a spouted vessel used to pour water on guests' hands before and after a meal. As no forks are used fingers needed washing, and it is probable that the native was taught hand-washing at meals by the Turk, who was not such a bad fellow as some people make out. 'Marama' and 'ibrik' are both Turkish words." (M.E.D.).

The two tethered beasts are worked in a violet-red silk in pulled stitch ("c" Plate XV), with outlines in pale blue and cream of the Turkish stitch shown at vi, in "d" on the same plate. This stitch, in apricot pink and pale yellow with a pale blue outline, is also used for filling in the animals' legs.

The "tree of life", to which the beasts are tethered by chains made of squares of gold thread, has a stem of gold plate worked diagonally bearing green leaves. The spots are worked in gold plate and the whole design has affinities with Persian pattern.

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No. 1937-12. Another "marama" of a similar weave, also with stripes weft of cotton and silk, has its ends embroidered with a procession of boldly stylised cocks, gaily worked in aniline dyed silks and gold thread (Plate XVIIB). Although the use of aniline dyes indicates that this towel is not very old, the pattern is probably a traditional one.

The body of each cock is outlined and the feet are worked in black, the head and most of the body is filled in with a flat or satin stitch in gold thread, as indicated by the slanting lines in the enlarged drawing, with a band of pulled stitch across the middle worked in violet. At the extreme edge there is a narrow border worked in coral pink, a colour which is also introduced as a small patch on the cock's neck.

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No. 1937-13. A motive representing "the dove returning to the ark" is repeated at the ends of a guest towel made of machine woven muslin (Plate XVIIC).

"This marama was obtained from Prizren and might be either Christian, Serb or Albanian work. The Ark seems to be based on the state galleys of the Middle Ages when Venice held the Adriatic coast, and is probably a traditional design. The curious running pattern below looks as though it might be symbolic, possibly a conventionalised dove, just the head and legs." (M.E.D.).*

The dark lines in the drawing are all worked in green in Turkish stitch, the bank of oars in the same stitch in red, and the dove in violet. The slanting lines represent flat or satin stitch worked in gold thread. Turkish stitch in violet, with a gold thread line down the centre, is used for the little border below the ark design. The whole of the plain part of the towel has a rolled edge very neatly oversewn, but where

* M. E. Durham: "Some Balkan Embroideries." *Man.* Vol. XXIII, No. 5, 1923.

11: Start E-4 (no date) 1939 EF1 Yugoslavia
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Montenegrins EF5

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the patterned section comes this is replaced by a very fine picot edge worked in orange silk.

No. 1937-5. One half of an end of a gaily embroidered "marama" is drawn at "E" on Plate XVI. The material is hand-woven cotton of a muslin-like texture, which again has both silk and cotton weft stripes. The pattern shows a strong Turkish influence, the towel being bought in Prizren in 1908. Prizren was then in Turkish terr[illegible]

Gold thread and black silk help to tone down the gay, but rather hard, aniline greens, red, pink and violet, and the final result is bright but pleasing. Gold thread is used for the running border, lining the stems, filling in the white berries of the drawing and the square spots. The large and the fern-like leaves are solidly filled in with a variant of the Turkish stitch, in which the stitches are sloped both going and returning so that it is like two rows of a slanted running stitch. A rough fringe of the warp ends finishes off the lower edges. The selvedges at the sides have not been finished off in any way, and the carry over of the spools of silk and doubled cotton which were used for the stripes leave it rather untidy.

No. 1936-49. Another towel of similar material to the last, but with a whipped selvedge, has a design of crimson roses with green, gold and black leaves. With the exception of a little pulled stitch in gold, the stitches used are also similar, but there is in addition a charming little border near the lower edge. The towel is another example from Prizren and the design is of Persian origin.

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No. 1936-58. A muslin marama from Scutari has whipped selvedges and a border at the ends of highly conventionalised flower sprays worked in pale blue, dull violet and pale blue silk in Turkish stitch, with flowers formed of three squares filled in with gold plate.

A border below the main pattern consists of double buds or flowers in gold plate which somewhat resemble crosses.

No. 1937-14. The last specimen of an embroidered towel is of machine-woven material and has a flower design without special interest.

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No. 1935-32. A very fine old "marama" from the Kolašin district of hand-woven cotton with wide weft stripes of a coarser cotton has six rows of the "ibrik" motive and four rows of a triangular motive woven on the plain material between the stripes.

Both these designs are woven in by means of small free spools, or possibly needles, and the same thick cotton weft is used as that for the stripes. The handsome border at the ends (Plate XVIID) is also woven in by a number of free spools, producing a result like fine darning in which the needle would go over one thread and under one thread of the fabric alternately.

The only materials used are Turkey red and black cotton, and a very fine gold thread.

The flowers are centred with gold and have red petals with gold spots, the whole being outlined with a band of black. Leaves and other details are chiefly outlined in red and filled in with gold. A weft stripe of red near the end has inserts of little triangles on the gold, and an amusing fringe made of the twisted warp ends is decorated with red and black beads, probably Venetian, small Turkey red tassels and an imitation coin.

11: Start E-4 (no date) 1939 EF1 Yugoslavia
Albania EG1
Serbs EF6

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No. 1937-10. A guest towel given to Miss Durham by Dom Simeone, a Catholic priest of Djakova, in Albania, was woven by his sister. It is of fine cotton with wide weft stripes of coarser thread and has a few narrow silk stripes bordering the plain cloth of the ends, which are decorated with a spool-woven pattern worked in wool, dyed with aniline dyes. The colours used are a hard pink, violet, blue, dark red and emerald, and the result is somewhat harsh compared with the other examples. The design of a stiff stem with three very conventional flowers is vaguely Turkish but the little borders on either side of the main pattern, consisting of two rows of circular spots, are rather charming.

Dom Simeone's initials D.S.C. are worked in red cross-stitch.

No. 1935-35. The two last " marama " with decorated ends have some of their motives brocaded in by free spools, but also have borders worked in the tapestry manner on the warp threads, whilst the cloth is still in the loom, in the style often called Persian openwork*, which is akin to needleweaving but much finer.

The example whose number is quoted above, is of hand woven cotton material 17 inches (43·18 cm.) wide and 4 feet (1·2 m.) long, and has five Persian open-work borders in Turkey red and white at the end, divided by coarse cotton weft stripes. Above this group of narrow border patterns there are two rows of " ibriks " in red filling the angles of a chevron pattern in white which has yellow four-petalled flowers at its angles. These designs are worked in with free spools.

The five open-work borders consist of two outer ones with tiny red rectangles on a white ground and three wider ones composed of chevrons in white filled in with red triangles; the whole border measures 6¼ inches (16·51 cm.) in width, and has a rich appearance.

No. 1936-57. This " marama " from Scutari is unusual on account of its size, being made of two widths of material each 13 inches (33·0 cm.) wide and measuring 7 feet (2·1 m.) in length.

It is of hand-woven cotton almost covered with broad and narrow weft stripes of a thicker thread, and the decorated borders at the ends are 7 inches (17·8 cm.) wide. The whole border consists of six narrow ones with a broader one in the centre, worked in pink, red and white, all divided from one another by groups of narrow weft stripes. The patterns are all geometrical, and based on arrangements of squares and triangles, and the six narrower ones are of Persian openwork, whilst the broader central one is brocaded with free spools.

A twisted fringe of the warp ends finishes off the whole.

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No. 1936-53. One of the two " maramas " for everyday use is of coarse, hand-woven cotton and has a group of Turkey red weft stripes at each end. It was bought in Prizren and used personally by Miss Durham.

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No. 1936-47. The other, also of coarse, hand-woven material, has an arrangement of broad and narrow stripes of gold plate at the ends.

B. **Bedspreads.**

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No. 1935-29. A gauze bed-cover from Scutari (Skodar) with warp and weft stripes in red and white, the wider red ones having a line of yellow or green down their centres, is an example from the latter end of the 19th Century, and formed part of a bride's outfit. The crossing of the pairs of red stripes with pairs of white stripes produces a gay, tartan-like effect.

* T. de Dillmont: " Encyclopædia of Needlework."